

Vermont



Chronicle

A Family Newspaper, Devoted to Politics, Home Industry, News, Agriculture and General Intelligence.

VOLUME XII.

BRA TLEBORO, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1845.

NUMBER 17.

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY BY
WM. E. RYHER.
OFFICE—No. 2 WHEELER'S STONE BUILDING.

\$1.50 (cash) in Advance; \$1.75 at the end of the year. For 6 months \$1.00, in advance; otherwise \$1.00. Village subscribers \$1.25 in Advance, or \$2.00 at the end of the year. No paper will be discontinued unless at the discretion of the publisher, until all arrears are paid. All advertisements of any considerable length should be handed in, as soon as Tuesday morning. Small ones early on Wednesday morning.

Poetry.

Sister Mine.

BY R. H. DANA.

Sister mine—Sister mine!
Why art so dear?
Why throbs this heart of mine,
Like the strong-tendrilled vine,
Clinging so close to thee
When thou art near,
Sister mine!
Sister mine—Sister mine!
Why art so dear?
Chill is this heart of mine,
Till that sweet smile of thine
Wakes it to life divine,
When thou art near,
Sister mine!
Sister mine—Sister mine!
Why art so dear?
Light is this heart of mine,
As is the sparkling wine,
Bright in its crimson shine,
When thou art near,
Sister mine!
Sister mine—Sister mine!
Thou art so dear
By that wondrous spell of thine,
Wreathed round this heart of mine
Till our twin spirits twine
When thou art near,
Sister mine!

Mr. Fletcher Webster's First Lecture on China.

A large and intelligent audience in the Tabernacle, Wednesday evening, listened with great interest and high gratification to Mr. Webster's lecture, which depicted in vivid colors the scenes, customs, manners and government of China, and imparted in a perspicuous style and unaffected manner, that kind of information in regard to this ancient, peculiar and remarkable people which we are most desirous to learn. We are so remote, as not perhaps duly to consider the vast extent of the Chinese empire. The United States, with Oregon, Canada and Texas, to the extreme boundary, would be less than China, which if Chinese Tartary be included, embraces the great body of Asia and contains, 5,000,000 of square miles, or more than one-tenth of the surface of the globe. This vast circumference has been well nigh impenetrable to foreigners, and even now, beyond the five Ports, the Empire is carefully guarded against any intrusion. The three religious systems prevalent are those of Confucius, of Fo, and Buddha; the first being mostly for the learned, and the last by its idol worship and various rites and superstitious ceremonies gathering the rude and ignorant masses in its train. There is no State Religion. The disposition of the Chinese is for toleration. There is a strong resemblance in the temples of Buddha, and many of the rites and ceremonies and peculiar dress of their priesthood, to those of the Chinese Catholics. Originally the Jesuit missionaries were favorites with the Chinese Government, but controversies among them, and the interference of the Pope, regarded as an intermeddling with State affairs, produced, as did similar causes in Japan, their expulsion. By the 17th article of our late Treaty, leave is granted to erect chapels and churches. The lecturer paid a worthy tribute to our distinguished missionary, Dr. Parker, who, he observed, enjoys in an extraordinary degree the respect and confidence of the Chinese. The Buddhist, instructed in his faith, believes in a heaven and a hell, but the knowledge of the common people is well nigh confined to the rites of their idolatrous worship. The lecturer on one occasion conversed with a man of the common class, and found him totally ignorant of a future state. He was informed of the true doctrine on this subject, and exhibited the greatest surprise. On one occasion it was announced that four Chinese officers of rank would visit the American Ambassador. They were preceded by two eunuchs, one armed with a whip, the other with an axe, next by several poorly clad soldiers, then by two eunuchs, on a wretched palanquin, who knew nothing of the brush or the currycomb, immediately following which the sedan, were the great personages themselves. They were large, good-looking men, in rich silk robes, adorned with precious stones, and the tail of a peacock hanging from each of their caps, which are not removed when introduced; it being civil with them to remain covered. They were very careful to observe the movements of the foreigners, and to take their seats at exactly the same time with them. Their first inquiry was the health of those they visited, and next for the age of each one present. Their conversation was very loud, so that they might readily be heard in the street. At the lunch, it being polite to leave nothing in the glass when drinking with others, the excitement of the champagne, &c., increased the vivacity and loudness of their conversation. As a part of their civility at table, they seized their food with their chop sticks, while the Americans must needs open their mouths and suffer it to be thrust into them. The only relief was to retaliate as far as possible. After this meal they examined every article of the dress of the strangers, and as a civil return expected all the articles of their own dress to be examined. The lecturer described in a very particular manner his voyage from Macao to Canton; the fortifications at the mouth of the river (where the banks are high, and separated by not more than a cannon shot distance) which were taken by the English, who landed not far from them, and marching to the top of the hill found these fortifications below them, and those within, entirely exposed to

their fire; the numerous boats; well nigh covering the river as you approached the city, often coming under full sail directly down upon you, but which in an instant, by the skill of their master were turned aside; the vast number of boats and houses built upon them, which constitute a large part of the city of Canton, (those who are born and live upon the water exceeding in number those who live upon the land,) and the streets of the city not exceeding eight feet in width, where, in walking, you are in constant danger of being knocked down, or having an eye put out by the sharp pointed bamboo upon which the Chinese bear their burdens. The ground upon which Canton stands is very low. The population is estimated at from 500,000 to 1,000,000.

In regard to the population of China, Mr. Webster seemed inclined to the opinion that the Chinese estimate of three millions was not far from correct. He instituted a comparison between China and France, and showed that while the Chinese are far more industrious, frugal and temperate than the French, and while marriage is encouraged among them to the greatest possible extent, and while peace has prevailed among them for 200 years, the same population to a square mile as in France, would quite equal the Chinese estimate.

It was mentioned that all the handsome female children had their feet compressed by bandages, in order that this great point of beauty, small feet, might secure for them wealthy husbands. These Chinese ladies were as much surprised at the small waists of the American ladies, as the latter were at their small feet. They thought such small waists could only be produced by some very painful process. (Too true.) The whiteness of our ladies' skins they thought the effect of paint.

Beggars have some peculiar rights. Though fewer than we should expect, considering the dense population; they may enter a shop and with a gong or other noisy instrument and their voice keep up a horrid clamor until they receive charity. The contest between the beggar to annoy, and the shop-keeper to bear all with silent fortitude and fixed refusal to give, was often amusing and protracted. Both were losing time, yet for the shop-keeper to yield was but to open the door to his disturbers, while one or more victors might throw some defiance around him by creating despair in the beggarly ranks.

The Government was termed patriarchal, but was in fact an unalloyed and unlimited despotism. The Emperor was the Son of Heaven, the immediate Vicegerent of the Most High, and the lives, fortunes and liberties of each and all his subjects were in his hands. The kingdom was divided into provinces, the Governor of each being directly responsible to the Emperor; and these provinces were subdivided, down to hundreds, all responsibility running back from the most subordinate officers to the supreme power. Governors were held personally responsible for that of their members, families for that of each and every member. This had a wonderful effect in preserving subordination and peace. There seems little justice in punishing the innocent for the sake of the guilty, yet the policy threw a network from which it was impossible to escape around every subject. A foreigner, in a great crowd, lost his gold watch. The Governor was informed of it, and said within three days it should be restored. He instantly seized the police officers, more than one hundred, and locked them up in prison. He then took one of their number, and told him to find the watch, for until this was done, his companions should not be released. Well, the families of all these officers were dependent upon them for a subsistence, so that they were all interested to discover the watch. Within the time specified it was restored, having been found in a house twenty miles distant in the country. [N. Y. Journal Commerce.]

MR. FLETCHER WEBSTER'S SECOND LECTURE ON CHINA.—The number assembled on Thursday evening, in the Tabernacle, to hear this gentleman's second lecture, showed the strong interest excited by the first. Mr. Webster observed that on the previous evening he had discontinued his remarks while on the subject of the Chinese police. But if the police were vigilant, the thieves were most skillful and daring. When about to enter a house for theft, they oil their bodies, and fix short knives in their hair, to cut the hands of those who would seize hold of it. They never go into a dark room, but choose to have light around them. Nor is it strange that their thieves should differ from ours, since the Chinese as a people, are the reverse of us in every thing. While a foreigner was asleep in his room with a light, the window being partly open, these thieves slipped softly in, one seized the sword and gun of the gentleman and watching his slumbers, while the room was stripped of every article in it.

When you rent a house, some Chinese offers himself as your steward, and if you employ him, he takes the keys and becomes responsible for everything, employs all subordinate servants, who are strictly responsible to him. If anything is stolen or injured, the steward must restore or make it good; and he finds redress for any losses or injuries inflicted by subordinate servants in withholding adequate compensation from their wages. He is responsible for everything, and holds every one employed by him, responsible to him. Indeed this principle of subordination and accountability pervades the entire society. Hence offenders seldom escape, every body being responsible for every body else. Though the innocent may suffer for the guilty, for nearly every crime, some one is punished,—the proportion between crime and punishment seems well settled, as the amount of rain is proportioned to evaporation,—and, like the rain, punishment falls upon the just and the unjust.

The Code of Laws is exceeding voluminous. There are laws and regulations for every thing that is done or suffered. All the minutiae of social customs and manners, modes of salutation, costume, changes of dress to suit the different seasons, are prescribed by law. When the Mandarin puts on his winter cap, others put on theirs, and it is winter at least where he governs.

[Mr. Webster here gave some account of the present Emperor, of Tartar descent, who is said to owe his present eminence to his gallant defence of his father, who reigned during Lord Macartney's visit to China. It is said that much treasure has been accumulated in one of the Tartar cities by the present dynasty, under the impression that they may lose their power and be compelled to retire to their ancient home. The dreadful ravages which attended the Tartar invasion were mentioned, and the desolation of whole provinces, as stated by the Dutch Ambassador then in the Empire. Few changes were introduced except the mode of wearing the hair, the present mode being of Tartar origin, and ordered at once by the Tartar monarch, that no differences might continue between the conquering and vanquished race. This Tartar mode of wearing the hair is not unlike that of our Indians—a style which seems to have travelled round the world—so that in our early wars the Indian warriors with their scalp locks, met the powdered cue of a French gentleman's wig on the heads of French officers.]

There is no aristocracy in China. Birth and wealth are less regarded there than with us. Peculiar respect belongs to the Family of the Emperor, and to the disciples of Confucius, who are the learned men, but with these exceptions, all are equal, of one blood, are without distinction of birth or fortune. The highest places are conferred as rewards of good conduct and eminent scholarship. It is reported, however, that of late, wealth has been used to purchase a literary degree, and as a consequence, employment by Government.

Among the Chinese officers who visited the American Ambassador, some of the highest rank appeared of least consideration. There are nine degrees of rank, shown by the button on the top of the cap and the peacock's feathers which adorn the dress, the red button indicating the highest official rank.

Various Boards of Commissioners are occupied with the several branches of public affairs. One is termed the Board of Foreign Affairs and Dependent States. This Board is said to have been that concerned in forming the recent treaty with Great Britain; and it seems a somewhat curious fact, that on one side of the world, the Anglo-Saxon race, in the person of the English, should be ranked as tributaries by a Tartar Sovereign, while on the other side, the Indians of that Sovereign's race seek protection from their Great Father, the Anglo-Saxon President of the United States.

[The lecturer described very minutely the ceremonies of the great dinner given by Keying to our Ambassador immediately after the signing of the Treaty, which began with fruits and ended with meats, and during which strange dishes almost innumerable of shark fins, deer muscles, bird's nests, &c., graced the feast, from which they retired at one o'clock.]

The orator spoke particularly of the rigid adherence of the Chinese to formal rules of etiquette, of the cards left by gentlemen (a good sized sheet of colored paper), of their letters, large or small, as might be written on fine and ornamental paper, always enclosed in an envelope and sealed with wax. He also spoke of the cheap literature of the Chinese, their libraries and the value attached to education, and of many arts and inventions, such as that of printing, the mariner's compass and gunpowder, long known to them before discovered by Europeans.

A filial regard for the government is planted in the minds of the people, and among all sentiments that of respect for parents and superiors is cherished as one of the highest duty. Children are not ennobled for the virtues of their parents, but parents are rewarded for the virtues of their children. Sons will interpose and ask that they may receive the punishment due to their parents. Nor is this unusual. The father is deemed to have a higher claim upon his son than even a wife or children. The son like Aeneas of old would bear his aged parent on his shoulders and leave his wife and children to follow. Tombs and monuments are built in honor of parents by the wealthy.

The worship of the dead is celebrated. Their tombs are built on the sides of a hill—and thither on certain days relatives resort with food and flowers—partaking of the former in honor of the dead, and garlanding their tombs with the latter. It is a ceremony, dictated by affection, natural, beautiful and touching. We think of the command from the highest authority, Honor thy Father and thy Mother.

The lecture concluded with observations on the History, Antiquity and Language of China. The opinion was more than hinted that the claims of the Chinese to a national existence as far back as to within 1200 years of the creation, was well founded, and that its original government patriarchal, retained striking features of those primary characters. The difficulties of acquiring the language are immense, nor would the labors of a life fully conquer them. They are felt by the Chinese themselves, and constitute one of the mighty barriers against the influence of other nations. Mr. Webster sat down amid great applause. [N. Y. Journal Commerce.]

IMPROVEMENT. The editor of the New York Tribune has examined recently in two establishments at Brooklyn, the operation of the apparatus known as "Clute & Seabury's Improved Patent Heat Generator." It effects a saving of from twenty-five to fifty per cent., in the amount of fuel required for steam engines; the cost of erecting the works with it is considerably less, as high chimneys, towers, &c., are superseded. The heat is entirely retained around, or absorbed into the boiler, so that one may put his hand on the chimney just above the boiler at any time, and experience no sensation but that of pleasant genial warmth in a current of air. The heat is so entirely retained that the fire being stopped, and all operations suspended at early evening, the workmen come back next morning and at once start the machinery again, without a particle of fire under the boiler.

A passionate temper renders a man unfit for advice, deprives him of his reason, robs him of all that is either great or noble in his nature; it makes him unfit for conversation—destroys friendship, changes justice into cruelty, and turns all order into confusion.

SEA SKETCHES.

By Rev. Charles Rich.

Ye waves! ye thunders! roll your surges on;
Shake ye old pillars of the marble sky!
Till all its orbs and all its world's of fire
Be loosened from their seats!"

AKESIDE.

Owing to certain local causes, the winds along the American coast usually prevail from the southwest between the months of June and September, and have therefore been called by sailors the "American trade winds." As our average course for Europe was about east-north-east, these semi-trades were on our quarter, and consequently the first part of the voyage was quickly and pleasantly performed. The breeze was variable in its freshness, and at times would die away to a mere fanning zephyr. It was my favorite amusement on such occasions to row off in the jolly boat to some distance from the shore, that I might observe and admire her appearance. It has been said that "the two most beautiful sights, are a pretty woman in a full dress, and a large ship under full sail." Whether the former be correct or not, judge ye;—of the latter there can be no doubt. Whoever has seen it will acknowledge the truth of the assertion. Alone on the bosom of the ocean, the only object upon which the eye can rest, the gallant bark disposes us of the idea that she is but a collection of inanimate matter, united by the will of man, and seems to be suddenly endowed with life, and a noble queen of the billows as she is, to move among them as if conscious of her superiority and imperial dignity. Though they may at times conspire for her destruction, yet again and again they battle; or if some wave more desperate than the rest plays the assassin's part, then wrapping close around, her own white sails for a winding sheet, and raising herself to the very sky that she may give the parting kiss of forgiveness to the storm-clouds, as they vent their rage upon her, she dies as a queen should die.

—"not unlamented nor unused."

From the day on which we took our departure from the Cape until the twentieth of September, the royals had been taken in. So favorable had been the breeze, and so pleasant the weather, that even our little main-sail had done us no important service by exerting its infant strength to hasten us on our course. But these days of sunlight and serenity were drawing to a close. The westerly wind had entirely died away, and for the space of fifteen hours there was a dead calm. Not a ripple was to be seen on the waters, nor a sound heard except the flapping of the sails against the masts as the ship rose and fell with the fast expiring swell. The morning of the twentieth was as lovely a one as can be found in that season of the year when "summer seems to linger in the lap of autumn." The sun drove up his burning chariot from his eastern palace unattended by a single cloud; and, clad in all his regal insignia about to cross the equinoctial line, seemed to shine with unusual warmth and brilliancy. The calm still continued, and alone the bright king rode on, until he reached his meridian height. Here, in his vanity, he lingered for a moment to gaze upon himself in the ocean's waveless mirror, and then hastened on to his western home. This movement was the signal for the elements. No sooner had the sun turned his back upon the meridian than cloud after cloud began, slowly at first and as in fear, and afterwards more confidently, to rise above the eastern horizon. These were the "light acids," coming as pioneers to select the spot and prepare the way for the meeting and revelry of the elements. Others more dense succeeded, and the dark heavy bank which lay along the eastern board, unbroken by a single gleam, warned us that a storm was rapidly approaching. Soon after the rising of the "acid" a slight dark green ripple was seen at a distance upon the waters, and in a few moments the breeze reached the ship. All the light sails were taken in, and the topgallant sails, together with the main-sail, handed. The wind continued rapidly to freshen, while the dashing of the spray beneath the bow, and the incessant gurgling of the water as it rolled up under the counter of the ship indicated that we were leaping over the billows at no slow pace. As the wind was about northeast, and consequently ahead, the Java was going close hauled; but so smooth as yet was the sea, that all sails being full she made no lee way, and sailed nearly as fast as if the wind had been abeam or on the quarter.

I was now about to witness, and, as anticipated, to enjoy that sight which had been the ultimatum of my wishes, a storm at sea. As Captain N. was anxious to reach Europe, as soon as possible, he continued to carry a heavy press of sail as long as the ship could possibly bear it. So vividly is that scene painted upon the canvas of memory, that I can see him even now standing, as he did, upon the weather quarter deck, holding on to the monkey-ladder to steady himself, while he watched the compass, and at one moment chided the man at the wheel for not keeping the ship close to the wind, and at another for shaking the sails, and then, as some fresh gust struck the ship, casting an anxious glance aloft to the topmast as they bent under the force of the breeze.

"Now, my good madam," said Captain N., addressing the ship as he was often wont to do, "show my young friend here that of all the gallant craft which sail these waters there is not one that can play with the gale like yourself. Look," said he, turning to me, "see how beautifully she flies almost in the wind's eye. One half of the frigates in our navy, with a breeze like this, would be flinging the spray over the lee foreyard arm, while the good lady scarcely sprinkles her cat-heads. I have often wished that I could fly with one of those frigates in a gale of wind, and if the Java did not shame them I am no sailor."

I knew very well that every sailor thinks his own craft the best, and consequently made all proper allowance for Captain N.'s enthusiasm; yet I could not but acknowledge that beautiful as had been the ideas of a ship rushing over the waters under a heavy press of canvass, the Java exceeded them all. Though the wind had now increased to a gale, the Captain manifested no disposition to shorten sail. His practiced eye, never still, was in every part of the vessel, ready to detect the first appearance of injury either to the spars or the rigging.

As the men had nothing to do but stand ready to act at a moment's warning, they were all collected together under the lee of the cabin, at one moment telling their long yarns of the dangers they had passed through, and the storms they had witnessed, and at another watching and remarking upon the movements of Captain N. and the action of the vessel.

"Many's the craft," said one of them, whose deep-lined, weather-beaten features bore evidence that he had been tossing upon the seas for many years, and to whom all looked up with deference as the most experienced among them, "many's the

craft that has carried this old bulk of mine across these same waters, and many's the one I've been proud of in a gale like this, but blast my eyes if ever I want a better sea-boat than the Java. As for sailing, Old Breezer has to puff like a grampus to keep up with her, and she is no more afraid of salt water than a porpoise is. And there's our captain, a regular-built fore-castle sailor; he never crept into the cabin windows—me, that I know by the roll of his walk and the cut of his whiskers. These fresh-water dandy captains, like the last I sailed under, who can't tell a sheet-anchor from a cat-book, instead of cracking on and combing the curls out of old Neptune's hair, would now be laying too under a close-reefed main-top-sail, blast the cowardly—"

THE STORM.

The speaker was interrupted by the green hand, almost paralyzed with fright, "Ain't none of you afeard we shall all sink and be drowned?"

"Sink, ye horse-marine, sink! did you ever hear of a sailor's being afraid of sinking, ye white liver'd, Varnumster? I say, cook, just rub your black paws over this baby's face and give it some color, or curse me we shall all be sea sick together."

"Oh don't—don't—I ain't frightened—no I ain't a bit—"

"You lie, ye are; your knees shake worse than a piece of bunting in a hurricane. Clap a stopper on your jaw, I tell you, youngster," as the boy was about to interrupt him, "or I'll make you find soundings in the lee sou'pers."

This threat, however severe it may have seemed, was thrown out only to create a laugh among the older sailors, in accordance with that right, which all jacks tars assume, of browbeating and frightening every green hand. But it was sufficient. The poor fellow withdrew himself from the circle, and leaning his head over the windlass pit, grasping it at the same time with both hands to secure himself, began to repeat the step he had taken in leaving his home.

"Darn my eyes if I ain't sick of this business. I guess if I can't make a plaguy mistake in coming to sea, I don't know. I wish I was back on the farm again hoeing potatoes. If I ever get back there safe, I'll give any man the best wood lot in the whole state if he catches me on board a ship again. Oh dear," (as the ship made a heavier plunge than usual) "what a wicked man that captain is to frighten me so. I mean to go and ask him to take down those sails a little while. O dear, how bad I begin to feel about it—"

Before he could close his sentence, a heavy sea striking the ship on the weather bow, dashed its spray completely across the fore-castle, wetting him to the skin, and so frightened was he, that letting go his hold upon the bit, the ship at the same time heeling down from the shock, the luckless fellow was pitched over backwards into the water that lay in the waist.

It was now evident to the captain and officers that it was impossible to carry such a press of sail any longer. The conversation of the sailors therefore was soon interrupted by a cry from the chief mate. "All hands aft! come my boys, what we do must be done at once and in true sailor style—stand by those main-top-sail halyards—man the reef-tackles—are ye ready?"

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Slack away on your halyards then—round in the clue lines—away away on those reef-tackles—give them another pull and then jump aloft, my good fellows."

"How many reefs shall we put in?" enquired the second mate.

"Put in two—mind that you haul the earings check out and knot your points well, as we may want to carry on that reef for some time."

In a few moments the top-sail was reefed and hoisted, the fore-top-sail and spanker were also double reefed, and as the ship carried a stiff weather helm the main-top-sail was handed. By the time this was accomplished the sun had set. The gale still continued regularly to freshen and the seas, under its influence, to increase in size. The rain too had commenced falling and we had the prospect for the night before us of encountering one of those violent, equinoctial gales which usually arise at this season of the year. At eight bells the first watch for the night came on deck, well protected with their pea jackets and tarpaulins against the storm. The rest of the crew were permitted to go below, after having been reminded by the mate that their nap would be a short one. The captain and second mate had also retired to their state rooms. So intense was the excitement created by the gathering storm, that I had no inclination to leave the deck and seating myself upon the weather side of the companion way regardless of the rain with which I was completely drenched, I gave full scope to my feelings.

Possessing a lively imagination to which the spur rather than the curb had always been applied, I loved, when on the land, to stray away to some commanding elevation and there watch the rise and progress of the storm, when grasping in its hand the lightning, with blackened bow and giant step it came rushing down the mountain's sides, and through the valleys, leaving everywhere the impress of its fury. I could sit for hours listening to its wild scream until I fancied it a living being and longed to join in its revelry. Much more was my imagination aroused, and far more wantonly did I sport, as I watched for the first time the movements of a storm upon the sea. Led on step by step I had forgotten the ship, the ocean, and the whistling of the blast among the rigging, and had created around me, under the inspiration of the moment, an ideal world, in which I was revelling in all the wildness of fancy.

"Well, Charles," said the mate, who had seated himself by my side, "how like you old Boreas? I wish while Neptune is rocking us in our cradle!"

I started from my reverie with feelings strongly akin to anger at the sudden destruction of the beautiful bubble upon which I had been gazing. While endeavoring to recollect myself, I replied somewhat sharply, "What did you say?"

"Are you asleep? Have you been dreaming about the bright faces at home if so, hang me if you are not the prettiest dreamer I have ever seen upon a ship's deck. I asked how you liked this north-east that is playing such pranks with the billows?"

"Like it? I like it much,—would that we had more of it. Do you call this a severe storm?"

"I tell you what, Charles, I have been on the sea for nearly fifteen years and I never knew a storm to commence as this has without its terminating in a perfect hurricane. Depend upon it, before the morning dawns, you will wish yourself ashore more than a thousand times."

"Never—never!" I replied; and arising from my seat I sprang to the weather rail. Waving my hat above my head with enthusiasm, I shouted to the utmost extent of my voice.

"Come on, my good breezes—muster all your forces and show us what you can do! make these topsails feel that a stranger has hold of them! arouse you fellows—the old fore-sail is laughing at you. Come on and do your best; I, at least, am not afraid of you." Having thrown out my challenge, I commenced whistling, that I might woo if not enrage.

"Hush, said the mate,—"you will wake those below. You are a noble fellow and ought to live and die on the sea and find a sailor's grave—"

What more he would have said I know not, for at this moment, as if provoked by the childish insult I had just given, a furious blast swept thro' the rigging and by the sails, while almost simultaneously with it, an immense sea lifting its white head over the weather bow broke in upon deck sweeping the whole length of the vessel.

"We have it now in right good earnest," said the mate. "These sails must be off the ship in less than ten minutes or they will be blown to rags and the ship down on her beam ends. Jump and call the captain and second mate, while I go forward and get every thing ready for having to."

I hastened to obey the order, and as I passed down the gangway I heard the mate's voice rising above the gale.

"All hands, a—b—o—y," was borne on the air, as one of the men aroused his sleeping comrades. "No matter how deep the slumber which holds the sailor, let but the summons 'All hands, ahoy,' be sounded above him, and he is on deck and even on the top-sail yard before the echo has fully died away. It was so in this case. Every man was immediately at his post. At the captain's request I took the wheel and permitted the helmsman to assist in shortening sail. The fore-top-sail and fore-sail were handed and the main-top-sail reefed, and under this sail together with the fore-top-sail the ship was hove to, that she might safely ride out of the gale. The helm was lashed alee and the watch again returned below.

However powerfully the wind may have blown at the time of my conversation with the mate, it was then but a breath compared with the roar which now went thundering through the air. The sea had increased to an enormous size, and the whole ocean was in a boiling foam. Wave chased wave. Some more ambitious than the rest, would strive to outdo their fellows in rearing their heads on high, until growing dizzy with their elevation they tumbled over one another, while a hoarse "hull" seemed to ring across the waters. The "hull" which usually attend a gale, in this instance were not heard; it was one harsh uninterrupted scream. At one moment the ship was riding "mild heaven" on the crest of a mountain wave which rolled on with the lightning's speed, and at another was sinking into the trough of the sea, while the water, as she fell, poured like a cataract upon deck over the lee-rail. The masts groined under the merciless treatment they were receiving, while the noble ship herself would first reel to and fro, and then heave as if stunned by the repeated blows which fell upon her.

The night sped on with no abatement of the violence of the wind or the sea. Thus far however we had rode out the gale in safety. Although surrounded with danger and liable at any moment either to capsize or to spring a leak, in which case all must inevitably have perished, not a breath of fear stirred in my bosom; on the contrary it was a night of intense delight; and although I did not wish that any accident might happen, yet, urged on by that uncontrollable power whose influence evades any one when in a state of excitement, I secretly longed for something more terrible. It soon came. The main-top-sail had nobly bared its unflinching bosom to the wild blast and coiled with all its strength to keep the ship headed to the wind, until feeling itself aggrieved, that while all the other sails were quietly sleeping in their gaskets, it was compelled single handed to fight the storm, it determined to endure it no longer.

I had just commenced remarking to the officer of the deck that the main storm-top-sail ought to supply the place of the top-sail, when a sudden sharp report overhead brought us upon our feet, and upon looking aloft we saw the remains of the top-sail, which had been rent from the bolt-ropes, flying in shreds upon the gale. Without waiting to consider whether I had any right so to do, I sprang forward and commenced giving my orders to the men. The ship having now no sail to keep to the wind, fell off at first, and then broaching to just as I had reached the waist, an enormous wave came rushing in through the fore-rigging, sweeping and tearing away everything before it. I caught but a glance of the sea and just heard the mate's voice, "Look out! save yourselves!" before I felt myself buried in its bosom. Choked with the water which was pouring into my throat, I convulsively threw out my hands to save myself, as I was borne along in the mingled mass. At this moment my senses left me, and I knew nothing more until I found myself in my berth and the steward bathing my temples. Upon enquiry I learnt, that the sea had carried me at more than half the length of the ship, about fifty feet, and dashed me against the bulwarks, doubling my body over the lee rail and davit. Had I been lifted but a few inches higher, I should have gone overboard and perished.

Although much bruised by the accident, I rose from my berth and hastened on deck, disregarding the entreaties of the steward who strove to detain me. The sea, I found, had completely swept the deck, carrying away nearly all the bulwarks and stanchions about the fore-castle—here off the cabin and long-boat—and dashed to pieces in its course the companionway and binnacle. The fore-top-sail also had been swept off near the cap, carrying along with it the fore and main top-gallant and royal masts. The ship was rolling in the sea a complete wreck. This was not the worst. Two poor fellows, who had been caught like myself in the waist of the ship, were washed overboard and buried in the bosom of the ocean. How the rest of those on deck escaped I cannot tell, unless it was that all, with the exception of the second mate, were forward of the sea as it came in, while he being well aft had time to secure himself by clinging to the taffrail.

As the mainmast was still standing, the main storm-stay-sail was set, under which the ship was again hove to. As if satisfied with having wreaked its vengeance upon our poor craft and as upon me in return for the challenge I had given during the earlier part of the night, the wind in a few